

Glossary of Aging Terms

Activities of Daily Living – Basic self-care activities, including eating, bathing, dressing, transferring from bed to chair, bowel and bladder control, and independent ambulation, which are widely used as a basis for assessing individual functional status.

Administration on Aging (AOA) – The primary agency in the federal government having responsibility to administer the provisions of the Older Americans Act. It advocates at the federal level for the needs, concerns and interests of older citizens throughout the nation.

Administrator – The person who is responsible for the total operation of a home and is responsible for the facility meeting standards and maintaining rules as established by the state.

Adult Care Home – A facility licensed in North Carolina that provides care for (7) or more people who do not need nursing care but are no longer able to remain in their own homes because they need assistance in meeting their day-to-day needs.

Adult Care Home Licensure Section – The unit within the Division of Health Service Regulation which issues adult care home licenses and enforces overall compliance with the licensure standards.

Adult Home Specialist – The person(s) in the county department of social services given primary responsibility for the monitoring and

oversight of adult care homes in the county and responding to all inquiries regarding licensure.

Adult Protective Services – Services provided to protect disabled adults 18 years of age and older from abuse, neglect and exploitation. All 100 county departments of social services within the state have a legal mandate to receive and evaluate all reports alleging a disabled adult has been abused, neglected or exploited, and provide and/or arrange for services to prevent further abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Alzheimer's Disease – A progressive, degenerative disease that attacks the brain and results in impaired memory, thinking and behavior. It is estimated that at least 70,000 people, primarily older adults, suffer from this disease in North Carolina.

Ambulatory with Assistance – Able to walk with the aid of assistive devices such as a cane, walker, etc.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA'S) – A body located within regional councils of governments which plans, coordinates, oversees and advocates for the development of a comprehensive service delivery system to meet the needs of older people in a multi-county area. They together with the United States Administration on Aging, the State Division of Adult and Aging Services, and local service provider agencies comprise the "aging network".

Authorized Representative – Any person that the Social Security beneficiary or Supplemental Security Income recipient requests to be given the right to represent him or her in any business with the Social Security Administration. The right to have an authorized representative exists for all claimants of Social Security and Supplemental Security Income benefits and is obtained by securing and completing the “Appointment of Representative” form SSA-1696 which defines the limit for fees to be charged by an authorized representative, the penalties for charging an unauthorized fee, and conflict of interest.

Case Management – An inter-agency, standardized process focusing on the coordination of a number of services needed by vulnerable citizens. It includes an objective assessment of client needs; the development of individualized care plan based on assessment that is goal oriented and time limited; arrangement of services; and reassessment, including monitoring and follow-up.

Community Advisory Committee – Appointed citizens who work to maintain the spirit of the Residents’ Bill of Rights as well as promotes community education and awareness of the operation of long term care facilities in a county and the needs of the persons residing in these facilities.

Certificate of Need (CON) – A certificate issued by a government body to a health care provider who is proposing to construct, modify, or expand facilities, or to offer new

or different types of health services. CON is needed to prevent duplication of services and creation of unnecessary beds. The certificate signifies that the change has been approved. In NC, the Division of Health Services Regulation in the Department of Health and Human Services handles CON.

Combination Facility – A facility licensed under G.S. 131E-102 providing nursing care and/or skilled nursing care and adult home care.

Continent – Able to control the passage of urine and feces. The opposite is incontinent or unable to control the passage of urine and feces.

Continuum of Care – A comprehensive system of long-term care services and support systems in the community, as well as in institutions. The continuum includes: (1) community services such as senior centers; (2) in-home care such as home delivered meals, homemaker services, home health services, shopping assistance, personal care, chore services, and friendly visiting; (3) community-based services such as adult day care; (4) non-institutional housing arrangements such as congregate housing, shared housing; and (5) adult care homes and nursing homes.

Contractures – Stiffening of muscles and joints.

Copayment – A type of cost sharing whereby insured or covered persons pay a specified flat amount per unit of service or

unit of time, and the insurer or public agency pays the rest of the cost.

Council on Aging – (Department on Aging or Office on Aging)- A private nonprofit organization or public agency that serves as a county focal point on aging and which traditionally provides supportive services to older adults.

Decubitus Ulcer – A sore or ulcer caused by the lack of blood circulating to some area of the body. This condition usually results from sitting or lying in one position too long. Other names are bedsore, pressure sore, and decubitus sore.

Deductible – The amounts payable by the enrollee for covered services before Medicare or private health insurance makes reimbursements. The Medicare hospital insurance's deductible applies to each new benefit period, is determined each year by using a formula specified by law, and approximates the current cost of a one-day inpatient hospital stay.

Department of Social Services – An agency of county government in all 100 NC counties responsible for providing and administering programs and services to its most vulnerable citizens.

An agency of county government through which many programs and services for older adults are administered.

Dehydration – Lack of adequate fluid in the body; a crucial factor in the health of older people.

Diabetes – A condition caused by a failure of the pancreas to secrete enough insulin. An older person may have poor circulation, poor eyesight, or other debilitating complications from the disease.

Discharge Planning – A centralized, coordinated program developed by a hospital or nursing home to ensure that each patient has a planned program for need continuing or follow-up care once they leave the facility.

Disorientation – Loss of one's bearing's loss of sense of familiarity with one's surroundings; loss of one's bearings with respect to time, place and person. The opposite of this is oriented.

Division of Health Service Regulation (DHSR) – The state agency which oversees medical, mental health and group care homes, emergency medical services, and local jails. Their authority also extends to long term care settings such as adult care homes and nursing homes. This Division has the responsibility of ensuring that people receiving care in these facilities are safe and receive appropriate care through the monitoring and enforcement of state and federal requirements.

Family Care Home – A residential home that is licensed in North Carolina to provide care for 2 to 6 people. The building itself is a normal house and is usually in a regular neighborhood with other homes and families next door. The care provided includes: room and board, personal assistance, supervision,

and meaningful activities provided in a family-like setting.

FL-2 – The form used by the physician to indicate the appropriate level of care needed by a patient.

Functionally Disabled – A person with a physical or mental impairment that limits the individual's capacity for independent living.

Geriatrician – A physician who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases of aging and the aged.

Guardianship – The legal power and duty given by the court to a person (guardian) for the purpose of serving as the legal surrogate decision maker for another person (ward) who has been determined incapable of making decisions about his or her personal and financial affairs. The legal powers and duties given to a guardian depend on the type of guardianship ordered by the court. The court may order that the guardian's power and duties be limited resulting in a limited guardianship.

Guardian of the Estate – Responsible for collecting, preserving and administering the ward's real and personal property.

Guardian of the Person – Responsible for making decisions, such as where the ward will live, and gives consent for medical care, counsel and professional treatment for the ward.

General Guardian – Performs the duties of both the Guardian of the Estate and Guardian of the Person.

Hospice Care – Care that addresses the physical, spiritual, emotional, psychological, social, financial, and legal needs of dying patients and their families. Hospice care is provided by an inter-disciplinary team of professionals and volunteers in a variety of settings, both inpatient and at home, and includes bereavement care for the family.

Medicaid – A medical assistance program for low-income people administered by the state through the Division of Medical Assistance in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. To be eligible a person must meet income and asset limits, be aged, blind, disabled, or a member of a family with dependent children, or a pregnant woman. Some people are covered by both Medicare and Medicaid. Medicaid pays the Medicare deductible and co-insurance and the Part B premium for persons eligible for both Medicare and Medicaid. The program is based on regulations from both federal and state.

Medical Care Commission – The Commission adopts, recommends or rescinds rules for regulation of most health care facilities. (hospitals, hospices, free standing outpatient surgical facilities, nursing homes, home care agencies, home health agencies, nursing pools, facilities providing mammography/pap smear services, free standing abortion clinics, ambulances, and emergency medical services personnel).

Medically Needy – A category of persons who may receive medical assistance under

some states' Medical Assistance Program. Medically needy coverage is the same as categorical coverage except that it often does not pay for emergency hospitals, intermediate care facilities, clinic services, and psychologists.

Medicare – A federal health insurance program for people 65 or older and certain disabled people. It is run by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Social Security Administration offices across the country take applications for Medicare and provide general information about the program.

The major parts of the Medicare program are: Hospital Insurance (Part A) helps pay for inpatient hospital care, inpatient care to a skilled nursing facility, home health care and hospice care; Medical Insurance (Part B) helps pay for doctors' services, outpatient hospital services, durable medical equipment, and a number of other medical services and supplies that are not covered by the Hospital Insurance part of Medicare and Prescription Drug Coverage (Part D) which helps beneficiaries pay for prescription drugs through enrollment in an authorized prescription drug insurance plan.

Nursing Home – A health care facility licensed by the state to provide long-term medical services according to the directives of a patient's physician and standards of quality set by the state and the facility. Nursing homes in North Carolina are staffed by professional personnel under the direction of a licensed nursing home

administrator; they deliver a variety of medical and social services to their patients.

Ombudsman – A representative of a public agency or a nonprofit organization who investigates and resolves complaints made by or on the behalf of older individuals who are residents of long-term care facilities. In North Carolina the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is in the Division of Aging and Adult Services of the Department of Health and Human Services. There are Regional Ombudsmen across the state serving all counties. They are located within the Area Agencies on Aging.

Personal Care – Care that involves help with eating, dressing, walking, and other personal needs but very little or no nursing supervision. The terms "custodial care", "domiciliary care", "adult care" and "residential care" are often used interchangeably with "personal care", although strictly defined "personal care" may imply a somewhat higher level of service.

Personal Needs Fund – A sum of money which residents who are Medicaid eligible, living in long-term care facilities are allowed to retain from their income to purchase personal items and/or services.

Power of Attorney – The simplest and least expensive legal device for authorizing one person to manage the affairs of another. In essence, it is a written agreement, usually with a close relative, an attorney, or financial advisor, authorizing that person to sign documents and conduct transactions on

the individual's behalf. The individual may delegate as much or as little power as desired and end the arrangement at any time.

Health Care Power of Attorney – A person designated to make healthcare decisions for another person when the designator is not capable of making those decisions.

Representative Payee – An individual who is chosen by the Social Security Administration and agrees to receive a social security or SSI recipient's check and to handle the funds in the best interest of the recipient.

Residents' Council – An organization comprised of either nursing home or adult care home residents. The establishment of the council in nursing homes is a federal requirement; however, there isn't a similar mandate for adult care homes. The purpose of the council(s) is to improve the quality of life, care and communication within the institution by providing residents a vehicle through which to voice their concerns and complaints in an organized and collective manner to management. Their presence offers residents an opportunity to exert some measure of control and self-determination.

Restraint – A device used to prevent a resident from falling out of a chair; e.g. a belt around the waist tied to a wheelchair or a jacket with straps tied to a wheelchair. A jacket restraint could be used to prevent a resident from crawling over the side rails of a bed. Wrist restraints are used under unusual circumstances. Restraints should be used as

protection for the resident and when other means are not reasonable.

Self Care – Bathing, dressing, toileting, and feeding oneself.

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) – A nursing home which provides 24 hour-a-day nursing services for a person who has serious health care needs but does not require the intense level of care provided in a hospital. Rehabilitation services may also be provided. Many of these facilities are federally certified, which means they may participate in Medicaid or Medicare programs.

Social Security Administration (SSA) – The federal government agency which administers programs throughout the United States. These programs include: Supplemental Social Security (SSI), retirement and survivors' benefits, and disability benefits.

Spend Down – Also known as a deductible. Under the Medicaid Program, spend-down refers to a method by which an individual established Medicaid eligibility by reducing gross income through incurring medical expenses until net income (after medical expenses) meets Medicaid financial requirements.

State-County Special Assistance for Adults – The Special Assistance Program provides financial assistance to help pay for room and board for older adults or adults with disabilities who are living in licensed adult care homes. Eligible recipients

automatically receive Medicaid to assist in paying for medical services and personal care. There is a special higher rate for persons living in licensed special dementia care units. The Special Assistance In-Home program, available in most counties, provides financial assistance to help Medicaid eligible individuals remain at home if they need the type of care provided in adult care homes. These programs are administered by local departments of social services.

Supervisor-In-Charge – A person whose qualifications have been cleared by the county Department of Social Services and approved by the N.C. Division of Health Service Regulation to live in an adult care home full-time or have charge of the management of it when the administrator does not live in or remain in the home full-time. There should be a supervisor assigned on each of the three shifts if they do not live-in.

State Unit On Aging – An agency of state government designated by the governor and the legislature as the focal point for all matters related to the needs of older persons within the state. Currently, there are 57 State Units on Aging located in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. In North Carolina, the office is called the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) and is located within the Department of Health and Human (DHHS).

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) – A federal program that pays monthly checks to people in need who are 65 years or older

and to people in need at any age who are blind and disabled. The purpose of the program is to provide sufficient resources so that anyone who is 65, or blind, or disabled can have a basic monthly income. Eligibility is based on income and assets. SSI is administered nationally and locally by the Social Security Administration.